

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SSC-01 /060 W

-----009871 010229Z /62

P 312022Z AUG 77

FM AMCONSUL HAMILTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2526 PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMILTON 403

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BD, UK

SUBJECT: PREMIER ANNOUNCES NEW CABINET

REF: HAMILTON 398

1. AFTER FOUR DAYS OF TENSE NEGOTIATIONS WITH BOTH FACTIONS WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY, PREMIER DAVID GIBBONS HAS FORMED HIS NEW CABINET. REFORMISTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN FOUR PORTFOLIOS (TOURISM, HEALTH, PLANNING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS) AND THE PROMISE OF A NEW POST TO BE CREATED WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS TO DEAL WITH CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (INDEPENDENCE). BALANCE OF PORTFOLIOS ARE RETAINED BY THE INCUMBENT CABINET MEMBERS FROM THE SHARPE GOVERNMENT.

2. UNDER NEW CAUCUS RULES PROMULGATED AUGUST 18, POST OF DEPUTY PREMIER IS TO BE SELECTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF HOUSE MEMBERS. IT IS CONCEDED THAT POST WILL GO TO REFORMIST C.V. WOOLRIDGE. DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADERS OF REFORMIST GROUP INDICATE THAT GIBBONS HAS PUT TOGETHER A WORKABLE COALITION AND THAT FACTIONALISM WITHIN THE PARTY WILL BE LAID TO REST.

COMMENT: ALTHOUGH PUTTING WOOLRIDGE IN AS NUMBER TWO MAN (AND HEIR APPARENT TO FUTURE POST OF PREMIER) WILL SOMEWHAT DISSIPATE GIBBONS' AND PARTY'S IMAGE AS WHITE, CONSERVATIVE, AND FRONT STREET CONTROLLED, IT IS CLEAR THAT UBP HAS UP-HILL BATTLE TO REGAIN CREDIBILITY
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WITH THE LARGE FLOATING MIDDLE CLASS BLACK VOTE. MEANWHILE OPPOSITION PEOPLES LABOR PARTY IS CAPITALIZING ON PAST FACTIONALISM WITHIN UBP AND CLAIMING THAT ELEVATION OF GIBBONS IS CLEAR CONCESSION THAT UBP IS PARTY OF THE WHITE, MONEYED INTERESTS IN THE COLONY. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT STRIFE WITHIN UBP DURING PAST YEAR HAS LOST THE PARTY CONSIDERABLE FACTION OF THE IMPORTANT FLOATING BLACK VOTE - TO THE EXTENT THAT SEVERAL UBP PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE CONCEDED TO ME PRIVATE-

LY THAT THE PLP WOULD PROBABLY WIN IF A GENERAL ELECTION WERE HELD NOW. HOWEVER, WITH THE FACTIONALISM ALLEGEDLY BEHIND THEM, THERE NOW SEEMS TO BE AN INFUSION OF OPTIMISM THAT THE PARTY CAN REGAIN LOST GROUND AND RETAIN ITS MAJORITY IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION IN 1981.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, POLITICAL SITUATION, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977HAMILT00403
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770315-1112
Format: TEL
From: HAMILTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977084/aaaaadgs.tel
Line Count: 70
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e1ae8457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 HAMILTON 398
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1536834
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PREMIER ANNOUNCES NEW CABINET
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BD, UK, (GIBBONS, DAVID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e1ae8457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009